

---

# THE ATHENÆUM.

---

VOL. I.] YALE-COLLEGE, SATURDAY, JUNE 12, 1814. [N<sup>o</sup>. 9.

---

*Neque cuiquam tam statim clarum ingenium est, ut possit emergere; nisi illi materia, occidat,  
factor etiam, commenditorque contingat.*

---

PLIN. EPIST.

## THE VAGRANT.

No. IX.

### THE ART OF FRIENDSHIP; A PERSIAN STORY.

*Atque in omni re considerandum est, et quid pos-  
tules, ab amico, et quid patiare a te impetrari.*

CICERO.

ORAN had no sooner deposited the remains of his father in the dust, and returned to survey the silence, emptiness and gloom, which the house of mourning exhibits after the solemnities of a funeral, than he felt, for the first time, in its full force, the irreparable privation which he had suffered, in the loss of a parent; his earliest and best friend had departed; and the world presented him the prospect of a wilderness, barren with ceaseless sterility, and life appeared a journey, protracted through solitude and sorrow. At first, he retired to his mansion, to brood over the images of his affection; in a medium of distress, too resigned to murmur at the dispensation of Omnipotence, yet too sullen to seek for the allevia-

tions of friendship. He had resolved to spend the remainder of his days in the stillness of retirement; to detach himself from life and its concerns; to renounce the pleasures of social intercourse, and to spend the remnant of his temporal existence in counting the hours that should bring it to a close. But a little time discovered to him that, though our love for life may be suspended by the pressure of some present calamity, it is seldom subdued; that when we have lost the possession of one good, we quickly begin to grasp at another; that the tide of our attachment to things of time, is frequently governed by the lunations of temporal prosperity; and that we often mistake the disgust of a moment for the actual disruption of our affections from earth. As soon as the sorrows of Oran were, in some measure, assuaged, he began to conceive new hopes, and to look around for a friend, whose counsel and kindness might be a substitute, if not an equivalent for the loss of his father. He had read in

the Zendavesta, "*If you find one friend, think yourself happy.*" I know, said Oran, as he read the passage, that the young make extravagant demands, and form improper expectations; but I will endeavour to avoid the error, and ask for but one friend, but let that one approximate to perfection.

With these sentiments and hopes, he set out in search of this friend. He had been to well informed by paternal counsel, to expect that the world abounded with them; but it must be a barren world indeed, said he, if it cannot afford one character such as my desires solicit, and such as my necessities demand.

The first whose favour he endeavoured to cultivate, was Ibrahim, *the experienced*. Ibrahim had lived long in the world, and seen much of the ways and manners of men. The locks of age had not whitened his head in vain, nor had the beauty of youth retired to leave him destitute of the dignity of wisdom. He was one of those rare characters, that can observe the wiles of a deceptive world, without imitating them; and, with all that adroitness in discovering and managing the passions of men, which constitute a demagogue, he had proved himself an honest man and a patriot. Fraud, however concealed, seldom escaped him; and the mark of hypocrisy was only a transparent glass, to discover and distort the deformity of her features to his view. In any difficulty in the conduct of life, which arose from those minute circumstances and casual exceptions, for which no rules can provide, the counsel of Ibrahim was of inestimable value—the response of an oracle that never deceived. But with all these excellencies, Oran found that his friendship

did not satisfy. Ibrahim seemed to think the purposes of friendship answered, when the solid benefit was conferred, and when he had finished the moral lectures, he had no more to say. He never descended to that easy familiarity, which begets confidence, and conciliates affection. Not that he gives his advice in a harsh manner, or at improper seasons. He knew well how to seize the pliable moment when counsel is most efficacious. But still he did not keep his own superiority out of sight. He never failed to discover to Oran, that he claimed all the prerogatives of age, and impress upon him a sense of the inferiority of youth. Oran, at length, found that there was little pleasure in that friendship, which was a constant restraint on one part, and a perpetual reserve on the other; that, though Ibrahim had many of those qualities which raise our esteem, he had few of those which rivet the affections. He therefore resigned his acquaintance, in order to seek for one who, while he possessed the wisdom of a counsellor, might, likewise, let himself down to the level of a companion.

The next whose friendship he sought, was Hassan, *the generous*. Hassan was a character almost the converse of Ibrahim. The one had lived in the world to detect its wiles; but the other was one of those open, generous souls, who, after having been duped a thousand times, by the frauds of the treacherous, still go on with a careless confidence, and receive every pretender to their embraces without suspicion, or enquiry. Hassan's house, and heart, and purse were always open to the wants of a friend; and if to supply the gaiety of the convivial hour, had been all that was demanded, Hassan would



not have been found wanting, when weighed in the balance of Oran's desires. But it was soon discovered, that though he was so pleasant a companion for the journey of life, he was no guide. Hassan had no rule of life for himself—much less could he direct a friend; and that very exuberance of generosity, which rendered him so much beloved, destroyed the calmness of his reason, and diminished the value of his advice. He entered so completely into your feelings—he so thoroughly imbibed your prejudices, that his counsel was merely taking a transcript of your own opinions, with all their original bias and prepossession. Oran therefore resigned him, resolved not to take the man for a friend, whom, with the truest claims for an unlimited confidence, he must perpetually distrust, and whose conduct, whilst it always satisfied the social wish, always violated the prudential maxim.

The next with whom Oran endeavoured to associate, was Agib, *the learned*. In him he expected to find the deficiencies of the other two amply supplied. Agib had dug deep into the mine of science, and had stored himself richly with the gold which they afford. He was well acquainted with the works of ancient and modern literature; he had estimated the merits, compared the beauties, and detected the defects of the principal writers of every age, and of various nations. Nor had he sought wisdom alone in the closet; he had travelled, and compared the manners, and attentively considered the laws and customs of the various countries that had come under his observation. But with all these inexhaustible stores for perpetual instruction and entertainment, one

thing was wanting. Agib was destitute of the moral principle; nothing could be more sublime than his intellect; nothing more depraved than his heart. He pretended to that philosophical virtue, which glitters through the theories of visionary declaimers, but has no influence on practical life. He was envious, selfish, and jealous; too fearful of a rival, ever to have a friend. "I seek a friend," said Oran, "by whom I may grow better as well as wiser, and Agib is not that friend—he, therefore, must be resigned."

The last whose confidence he courted, was Selim, *the virtuous*.—"In the fulness and perfection of Virtue," said he, "I shall find a lasting resource;" and, of all men, Selim was the most fitted for a friend, were sound integrity all that is needful. Selim was one of those characters who do not spend their lives in explaining duty, but content themselves with practising it. Honest, benevolent, pure in heart, and blameless in his life, he found his highest happiness in doing good. In the chamber of distress, at the house of mourning, and in the cottage of poverty, Selim was always found a guest, participating in their sorrows, and dispensing consolation. He did not, to understand his duty, have recourse to a long train of moral deductions, or to essays of those who elaborately explain the duty of man. To know what was right, he only had to listen to the instantaneous admonitions of his own breast. Nor was he contented with the practice of those duties which arise from the connection of man with man. Three times a-day, from the high hills of Bagdat, did Selim lift his orisons to the great Benefactor of the universe; as often did he retire for profound contemplation

and religious repose. His character was adorned with every thing that is winning in deportment, and every thing that is great in virtue. But Oran had the mortification to find, that the greatest moral excellence, of itself, does not complete the character of a friend; that in the social intercourse, there will be found intervals, which can only be filled from an intellectual source. While you discoursed upon the common topics of the benevolence of the Deity, or the defection of man, the beauty of virtue, or the deformity of vice, nothing could be more copious than Selim's conversation—for he felt all that he said; but come to any abstruser subject, and you had wandered beyond Selim's bounds; he who before supplied you with such rich munificence, surprised you then with sudden barrenness. After a long trial, Oran at length began to be convinced, that, though Selim had much to recommend him, much was still wanting; that the real votaries of virtue may sometimes be satiated with its refined conversation; and, though he was reluctant to resign Selim, yet he neither answered his expectations, nor satisfied his demands.

"Ah," cried Oran, "how forlorn is my situation! I sought but one companion, and that one I am unable to find."

A venerable dervise happening to hear the exclamation, and learning the cause of his sorrow, thus addressed him:

"Friend, the disappointment of which you complain, is not unusual; and, however moderate you may have thought your desires, I cannot but think your complaints grow out of your own extravagance. You have curtailed indeed your expecta-

tions, in one respect; but have unwarrantably enlarged them in another. You have demanded a friendship, which you must have been sensible that human imperfection cannot supply; which you yourself cannot reciprocate. You ought to have set out with laying down this important maxim—*That no man is completely unworthy the name of a friend, who is capable of bestowing either useful instruction, or innocent delight.* You must make the best of men as you find them; and the useful qualities which you cannot find in one, you must collect from many.—To Ibrahim you may look for advice to direct the œconomy of life, when other sources fail; and though he cannot answer your purpose in the hour of ease and relaxation, yet you are not to discard him on that account. Had he all the qualities which you demand, he would cease to be Ibrahim; the dignity of his wisdom would lose its influence, by the levity of more familiar intercourse; yet he is useful in his place; and though he may not satisfy you on all occasions, he may be of inestimable value on some. To Agib you may look for all the instruction that books can afford; and gain from him much of that knowledge which may exist without virtue. Yet it would be absurd to make him the director of your conscience, or ever to consult him about those secret sins and sorrows which may perplex or distress you. In such emergencies, you must have recourse to Selim. In explaining any duty, the understanding of which depends upon a delicate moral sense—a quick perception of right and wrong, he is your man, and will guide you, as well as the wisest, to virtue and to peace. Even the volatile Hassan need not be discarded;



for, though he is not to be trusted on important occasions, yet he may recreate your spirits when business is suspended, and application becomes hurtful. Thus you may make all contribute something to your happiness—something to your use. Go, mistaken youth, begin life once more. Form new views, adopt new plans. Let the streams of benevolence, which you would confine to a solitary channel, flow around in little rivulets, dispensing its blessings to all mankind. But if you are not satisfied with this allotment of things—if you are soliciting more from earth than earth can ever bestow—if you will make no abatement in your demands, and can set no bounds to your hopes—look beyond this imperfect world, command your desires to ascend, contemplate the Deity, and permit your social feelings to revel in all the fullness of infinitude and perfection.”

#### CRUELTY and TENDERNESS.

TENDERNESS is considered, by most people, so indispensable to a virtuous character, so necessary for Man, while under the domination of his violent passions, and so ornamental to human nature in every situation, that the world has ever branded with deserved infamy that person whose predominant trait is Cruelty. Almost every one possesses what are usually called *virtuous foibles*—those little habits, in themselves injurious, which flow from a well-meaning heart, guided by mistaken notions.—These, as they are not the offspring of a malicious spirit, and sometimes produce effects rather salutary than otherwise, are considered sufficiently harmless to be passed over, rather in silence than severe reprehension. But Cruelty is never justifiable, as it

never produces good effects; and is always dangerous, as it is not the result either of Reason or Virtue. It is a step farther than human beings have a right to advance; and of the two evils, unreasonable tenderness and excessive rigour, the greatest. Its effects extends both to the person that gives, and the one that receives—it inflicts a wound, the remembrance of which, no future tenderness can obliterate; and even if it could, we have little reason, from observation, to think that it ever would be.

Tenderness to those about us, is so excellent a quality, that it never fails of being mentioned to a person's credit. We never lose one friend, but often gain many, by showing ourselves willing to overlook those small failings which nature or education has implanted in those around us, by viewing man as a being so constructed by his Creator, as to be tossed about by passion, the victim of his rage and desires—by commiserating with the unfortunate, although the very person himself might have been the cause of his own unhappiness.—Surely such a spirit, was considered with propriety by Shakespeare, as “AS AN ATTRIBUTE OF HEAVEN.”

And it is this loveliness which is thus attached to it, and which a virtuous person cannot fail to possess, which makes it more desirable that we be careful to retain it; for it is the case with our passions and evil habits universally, that it is much easier to avoid them at first, than to shake them off when once contracted.

*Facilis descensus Avernus;*

*Sed revocare gradum—*

*Hoc opus, hic labor est.*

As it is the duty of human beings, when two extremes of conduct are placed before them, the one of which

will be productive of too much misery, and the other of too little, to lean towards the safest side and choose the latter; so, whenever we are at a loss respecting the rigour which an action merits, our minds should consider it indulgently rather than sternly; for as humanity is incapable of reaching perfection, it is not right, in all cases, to judge it by perfect rules. This is the rule of Law, the dictate of Reason, and the solemn injunction of Scripture. That fine painter of human nature, Shakespeare, has placed this subject in a striking light in his "Merchant of Venice." Even Shylock, so cruel and unmerciful himself, admired in his judge, that mildness which he should have possessed.

But Cruelty is not thus to be avoided because it affects the one only who experiences its consequences; it is no less injurious to the person thus cruelly inclined. It hardens the heart against suffering—shuts out Reason and Reflection—robs the possession of the greatest ornament to human nature, and makes him forget that, as his fellow-creatures are in his hands, so is he in the hands of his Creator.

But it is supposed by some, that for the sake of example, it is better to overleap the bounds of Reason, than to fall short; and that Justice is more nearly allied to Rigour than Clemency. This, however, is a mistaken idea. Cruelty is as far from Justice as light is from darkness; it has not its origin in the same motives; nor is it inflicted with the same intention. Justice is every person's due; Cruelty, nobody's. The former is absolutely necessary for our happiness and security; the latter destroys both in the most effectual manner. The one naturally excites

our love and reverence; the other, none but emotions of disgust. This discovers a mind which delights in preserving the rights of mankind; that makes us forget that men have rights, or that if they have, they should be respected. Cruelty is, in its very nature, cold and unrelenting; Justice looks with an eye of Mercy which

—Droppeth like the gentle rain from Heav'n,  
Upon the place beneath: It is twice bless'd,  
It bleaseth him that gives, and him that takes.

Messrs. Editors,

IF you think that the following would answer the purposes of your publication, it is at your disposal.

Caldwell, N. Y.

THIS neat village is situated at the southern extremity of Lake George. Much has been said concerning the beauties of this piece of water, but I have never seen any description from which an adequate idea of it could be formed. Although my expectations were raised to a high pitch, they were more than fully gratified.

The road from Queensbury on the Hudson passes through an almost continued forest of pines, where nothing meets the eye but naked trunks and scanty branches above, and dwarf whortleberries below.—Occasionally, however, the prospect is enlivened by small patches of wheat, fit for the sickle, interspersed with numerous burnt stumps, eight or ten feet high. This country continues about 14 miles. After 11 miles tedious riding through a very sandy road we were suddenly aroused by a "vista view" of Lake George. We were highly gratified with this transient glimpse of the termination of our ride. We saw its beauties with eyes rendered more sensible by contrasting it with the



dreariness of the country through which we had just passed. But it was short. We again plunged into the woods, and rode 3 miles farther, when we a second time emerged into day, and the village of Caldwell laid before us. It is a small settlement lately erected into a shire town, and appears thriving. From its situation it is the port through which all the produce designed for Troy and Albany passes from Lakes George and Champlain. It was founded by a gentleman from Albany, whose name it bears, and whose hospitality and worth entitles him to universal esteem. He has beautified the village with several neat buildings and a small Church. His residence is on the bank of the lake, and the water washes the foot of his Garden.—The ground rises from the water on all sides, but gradually on the South and West; on the eastern side the mountains meet the brink. They are covered with wood to the top, and rise to the height of 800 or 1000 feet.—The sun set as we entered the village, where we found a good lodging, and retired in expectations of much gratification in the morning.

In the morning, after breakfasting on the justly celebrated trout of the lake, we sailed about 12 miles up to a place called *the Narrows*. The scenery was changing continually.—The mountains were always picturesque in their forms, often grand and ever varied. The transparency of the water and the stillness of its surface, which caused our skiff to seem suspended in air, afforded gratification of a novel nature, while the numerous and beautiful islands that gemm'd the surface added new charms. We returned to our hotel highly gratified by our excursion.

After a short repast, my compan-

ion and myself, walked round to the head of the lake to Fort George.—Our road laid through the ruins of Fort William Henry. Several graves were observable in the sides of the rampart, and the outlines of the entrenchments were indistinctly visible. Fort George, whose ascent is gradual on all sides, stands in an open field, about half a mile distant from the lake, and is commanded by several mountains within a short distance.—It was, therefore, untenable against troops furnished with Artillery. It is now in such a state of ruin, that we found no difficulty in ascending to the top, altho' in some parts 20 feet high. Several Embrasures are still visible.

The prospect from this Fort is superior to that from any place in the southern part of the Lake. The water seems imprisoned by eminences of the most romantic forms, while the islands sometimes spotted with cottages or summer houses formed places on which the eye reposed with pleasure. This Fort being an intermediate post between Ticonderoga and Fort Edward, and at the head of this lake, was formerly a depot of importance, and in the war against the French and Indians was taken and retaken several times.—Burgoyne took it in 1777, and made his depot of provisions in Diamond Island, as being more secure from surprize. It was again taken in 1780 by an expedition from Montreal under the command of Maj. Carleton. It has since the revolution been dismantled, and in a great measure destroyed. The top is covered with grass, and raspberries grow in abundance in the walls. The ramparts, once paced by the watchful centinel, are now trodden by the foot of Curiosity alone; and the walls, once the terror of the surrounding country,

now afford shelter to the wild animals who inhabit it. Several burrows of these animals were observable in the ramparts and embrasures. A scene like this is thus described by Mr. Scott—

Sweet Teviot, on thy silver tide,  
The glaring bonfires blaze no more;  
No longer mail-clad warriors ride  
Along thy wild and willow'd shore;

Where'er thou windst by dale or hill,  
All is peace, but all is still;  
As if thy waves since time was born,  
Since first they roll'd their way to Tweed,  
Had only heard the shepherd's reed,  
Nor started at the bugle horn.

[*Lay of the Last Minstrel.*

M.

## POETRY.

### A THOUGHT OF HOME.

WRITTEN IN THE WINTER OF 1812.

REPOS'D in caverns dark and drear,  
The northern tempest sleeps awhile;  
Even Winter, in his frowns severe,  
Even frowning Winter deigns to smile.

On a lone hill, whose lifted height  
Seems rear'd the storms and seas to brave,  
I sit—companion of the night,  
And listener to the breaking wave.

From home remov'd, 'midst strangers cast,  
While hopes excite, or fears benumb,  
I think of blissful moments past,  
Or happier moments yet to come.

I live—they're here—strong mem'ry speaks;  
Anticipation brings her store;  
With bounding heart and burning cheeks,  
I feel the joys once felt before.

The plain for sport—the bower for love,  
Where youth or boyhood us'd to go—  
The elms that spread their arms above—  
The restless brook that ran below.

The shaded pond—the labouring mill,  
Round which the river winding stray'd—  
The spire beyond the distant hill—  
The ancient school-house, half decay'd.

All, all are here—I am not blind,  
Not dup'd by fancy's wayward zeal;  
'Tis not the mockery of the mind;  
'Tis something that I see and feel.

My mother! o'er the distant stile,  
I see her look—she now is near;  
I guess her by that heav'nly smile—  
I know her by that bursting tear.

My sister! dost thou near me stand,  
And ev'ry doubt and fear remove?  
Do I not press thy trembling hand,  
And kiss the lips of chastest love?

My father! at that sacred name,  
With reverence, love and awe I bow;  
I feel anew the filial flame,  
Delightful once, but rapt'rous now.

Friends! how they haste, with gen'rous zeal,  
The wand'rer on his way to greet;  
They smile upon me, and I feel  
The sum of human bliss complete.

Where am I?—All the charm is o'er;  
No father, friends, or sister nigh;  
The wave beats lazy on the shore—  
The wind sighs loud and passes by.

## TO MUSIC.

AH! who, "heavenly maid," hath not felt thy  
control,  
Entranc'd by the charm of thy magical lay?  
Hath not felt thou canst touch the fine chords of  
the soul,  
Whether sorrow or joy prompt thy fingers to  
stray?

Ah! who, when the moon-beams sleep soft'y  
around,  
And the murmurs of ocean are hush'd to repose,  
Can hear, unematur'd, the lute's silver sound,  
Where the zephyr just kisses the wave as it blows?

And who, 'mid the same tranquil slumbers of  
pleasure,  
When silence but deepens the sorrowful wail,  
Does not sadden as Philomel's heart-piercing  
measure  
Swell's plaintively shrill in the echoing vale?

In her coral abode, the fair maid of the billows,\*  
Seems to chaunt notes of joy to the Queen of the  
skies;  
But the nightingale perch'd on the sad weeping  
willow,  
Plains dirges of grief, where her paramour lies.

Thus the same gentle breeze, that wafts dreams of  
gladness,

And fans with its pinions the breast to a glow;  
When fluttering, oppress'd with the burthen of  
sadness,

Will ruffle the breast and consign it to woe.

LAURA.

\* *The Mermaid.*